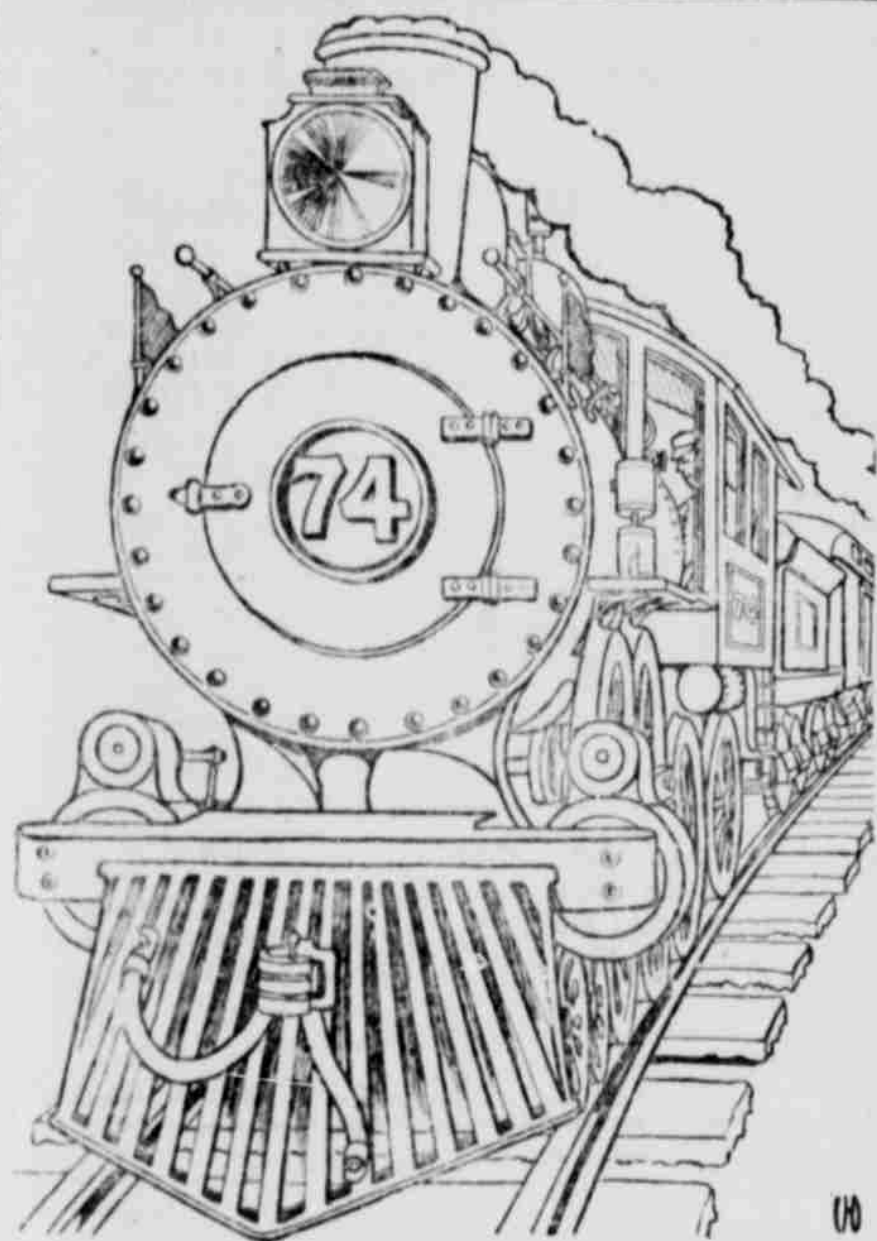


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**J. C. RUTTER,**  
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Delivered by Prof. V. G. Kee on Dec. 1st, before the  
First District Educational Association at Princeton, Ky.

The connection of children with their environment is a question that very early in the career of every teacher, presents itself. One does not have to teach long to learn that the well-behaved and agreeable children have been reared in orderly homes, while the unruly and vicious are come from homes not well regulated. There is no surer index to the domestic life than the representative girl or boy from six to fourteen years old. Occasionally good men have come from improper surroundings and have been great in spite of their environment, but they are an exception to the usual rule. It is not only a disposition of the child to be influenced by its surroundings, but of the human mind regardless of age. It is thought that long association with those mentally unbalanced will tend toward insanity in the person so associating. We are unconsciously influenced for good or bad by the company we keep, by the books we read, *i. e.*, by our environment. All association of souls is productive in varying degrees of assimilation. We are imitative creatures and children are especially so. In habit, in thought, in action, in everything this is true. Our first knowledge of language is obtained by imitation. We follow patterns in everything. Whether we will or no, we like to follow in beaten paths and in undertaking any new thing our first desire is to find out how it has been done by a predecessor.

Again, not only are we imitative creatures but, by the law of association our minds tend to repeat an act or thought once done or conceived. This trait of mind is at once the most potent for good and for ill. Under it all our habits are formed, both good and bad. When we consider that childhood is the formative period of life and that to whatever influences the child mind is subjected, it will be shaped accordingly, how much should we as teachers realize our responsibilities in the matter! When we remember that a large percent of our pupils, do not have proper surroundings at home, that many of them caused from non-church-going families, how we should be impressed to do our duty toward them in the matter of moral and religious instruction! Have we not all been impressed both by our professional press and by the secular press, during the last few months, that the times are demanding more than even that the teacher shall be both a potent, moral and religious factor in his community? The state of New York has enacted laws requiring regular courses in ethics to be taught in all schools receiving state aid. The question of moral training in public schools is the burning question of today among educators. Just in the same degree as the public school of the future, so in the same degree is it going to be expected that moral ethics be taught. The tendency toward church union that has manifested itself of late in our county has already been helpful to teachers in this work. There is now scarcely any objection anywhere to the Bible in school, even with judicious comment. There are some public schools in Kentucky today where before entering upon the duties of each day work all the pupils and teachers are assembled into a large auditorium built for that purpose when the Bible, the greatest book yet known on morals is read and explained. When songs are sung and prayer is made. It is a fact that in all such schools the problem of discipline is greatly simplified. In such schools the pupils are early impressed with their individual responsibility for their individual conduct. In such schools those who do not get moral and religious instruction anywhere else have the opportunity of learning lessons of true wisdom and become early possessed with a noble ambition to do something in the world that it may become better by their having lived in it.

For these reasons it is becoming all the more necessary that teachers shall themselves be believing Christians. It is generally conceded that our nation is becoming more intellectual, but God deliver us from an age of pure reason. France experienced such an age and her awful example will serve as a warning for all coming ages. Let us hope that we are also becoming a more devout people. With this increased spirituality then will come a deeper professional zeal. Just to that degree that we can appreciate the great Divine love, we will ourselves take on a deeper love for our work and a desire to benefit humanity. Every superintendent present knows the difference in results of a teacher who is really in love with her pupils and who has won their affections and one whose pupils obey her through fear. How many times have we known pupils to become fond of unattractive studies in which they had little or no interest when they had found out their teacher was really in love with them and solicitous for their welfare. Many times a love for a study is in the final analysis only a fondness for the teacher. That teacher who can popularize difficult subjects is a success.

Then, too, how different the discipline in the respective rooms. When love resigned there was no need for any other master. That discipline is best that calls least attention to itself.

Not only does the question of environment pertain to the future of the child, but by it his present happiness and success as a student is largely determined. It is a fact that only when the mind is free from care and anxiety is it capable of acquiring knowledge. How often have teachers complained

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of having chronic idlers in their rooms, the minds of which pupils were brooding over some great burden oppressing their youthful physical and mental vigor. We are too much disposed to think that childhood is free from care. I think I have seen little boys grieve as generously over the loss of a marble as his father could over the loss of a favorite horse. But this only faintly describes the cause for day-dreaming among students. Many times there may be some domestic infelicity that is disturbing their minds. This leads me to say it is impossible to make the success in teaching a child whose home life we are not acquainted with. It is a part of the child, and teacher can rightly understand the child's nature of whose home-life she is unacquainted. For this reason I think it should be a part of the regulation of every school, for the teachers to visit their pupils homes. Not only does it put the teacher in possession of valuable information but also is conducive of bringing about a healthful spirit of co-operation between the teacher and parent, without which success is impossible. No doubt many a child has been punished for things for which his environment alone was responsible.

Nor is it sufficient that the teacher be an inspiration to her pupils and an example. The same general high moral tone that pervades the class room should be maintained on the play grounds. The superintendent that permits bad language, smoking, unfair play and rowdiness on the play-grounds is not worthy of his high office. The way to prevent these things is to get out among the pupils in a companionable way and respect for your presence, if you are maintaining your proper respect and dignity is necessary. How often has it been charged and justly too that "my son learned to chew, smoke or even swear at school!" Would that the moral atmosphere about every school house were such that all its patrons could feel that their children instead of acquiring mischievous habits, were being morally uplifted! No other factor is going to tell in the future so much for the success of a school as this one. This one thing can help solve in large measure the question of attendance. It works both ways. It keeps the parents confidence unshaken in the efficiency of the school and makes him feel that his child can not afford to be without its wholesome influence. It makes the child a proper self respecting person with confidence that he or she will become in the future an important personage in the community. Virtue, honesty, sobriety, and truth are admired by everybody. Let it be known that your school stands for these things and it is by far the best advertisement it can have. There may be some who have so far strayed from right paths that they do not feel comfortable in a whole environment, but as a rule there is no sinner drawing card. All men love virtue, even those who do not practice it.

No character is perfect that does not contain as constituent elements, justice, mercy, benevolence, humanity, self-control and patience. Nor is conduct praiseworthy until it has been prompted by these motives. I care little for conduct that is not inspired by right motives. It is true that the child's will should be subservient to the teacher's or parents' will until he gets old enough for his own will to control his conduct. Then let him be thrown on his own responsibility. Then let the teacher insist on his doing right for rights sake.

We hear too much of natural depravity and of that which is inherent in us causing us rather to do wrong than right. I believe there is as much real pleasure in a healthy moral exercise as in health that physical and mental exercises. All of us have known children who seemed to take the greatest possible pleasure in doing right. All our unhappiness in this world comes as a rule from the violation of some moral or physical law. Teach the child as early as possible that true pleasure is to be found alone in right conduct. The greatest philosophers of all time has taught this and indeed among the Greeks and Romans it was their only solace. But since we know the Greek and Roman morals failed to give the

highest pleasure, we are not to leave our pupils to depend on them. They were good so far as they went, but there can be no perfect morals without Christianity. The religious man is essentially a moral man and the highest morality comes only through religion.

This brings me to notice some means for aiding good morals. The consciousness of having accomplished well and faithfully any assigned task yields more strength. Self reliance must at all stages of the pupil's career be insisted upon. Be careful to allow no opportunity for cheating on tests. Many are probably started into dishonest paths in this way. It is good morals to teach your pupils that their diploma will avail them nothing. That they must carry it through the world and that it can not be relied on, to carry them.

My last point is about reading. How many of us neglect to get proper supplementary reading for our pupils? Those of us who do may be sure they are reading something. It is the height of folly to keep pupils going over and over again the regular reading lessons. They become stale and uninteresting. It is not the work pupils do that jades them, but the drudgery that unthinking teachers sometime impose. Work is as pleasant and upbuilding in the realm of mind as anywhere else. There is moral value in proper reading and if it occasions a great deal of work, well, for work in proper also has great moral value.

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Leave Marion 703 am	Arrive Evansville 945 am
Leave Marion 127 pm	Arrive Evansville 345 pm
Leave Marion 340 pm	Arrive Evansville 630 pm
	Arrive Mattoon 930 pm
Leave Marion 1130pm	Arrive Evansville 150 am
	Arrive Chicago 930 am

SOUTH BOUND	
Leave Marion 336 am	Arrive Princeton 200 am
	Arrive Nashville 810 am
Leave Marion 717am	Arrive Princeton 1215 pm
Leave Marion 340 pm	Arrive Princeton 450 pm
	Arrive Nashville 925 pm
Leave Marion 735 pm	Arrive Princeton 815 pm
	Ar Hopkinsville 945 pm

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